

CLEOPATRA.

Being an Account of the Fall and Vengeance of Harmachis, the Royal Egyptian,

AS SET FORTH BY HIS OWN HAND.

By H. RIDER HAGGARD, Author of "King Solomon's Mines," "She," "Allan Quatermain," Etc., Etc., Etc.

"This is a heavy matter, O Queen," I said. "I had wished to show upon what circumstance I base my forecast."

"Nay, not so, Harmachis; I have wearied of the ways of stars. Thou hast prophesied



AND NOW HER LIPS MET MINE.

that is enough for me: for, doubtless, being honest, thou hast written honestly. Therefore, save thou thy reasons and we'll be merry. What shall we do? I could dance to thee—none there are who can dance so well—but it would scarce be queenly. Nay, I have it; I will sing." And leaning forward, she raised herself, and, bending the harp toward her, struck some wandering chords. Then her low voice broke out in perfect and most sweet song.

And thus she sang:
Night on the sea, and night upon the sky,
And music in our hearts, we floated there,
Lulled by the low sea voices, thou and I,
And the wind's kisses in my cloudy hair;
And thou didst gaze on me and call me fair—
Enfolded 'twixt the starry robe of night—
And then thy lips thrilled upon my ear,
Voice of the heart's desire and Love's delight.

Adrift, with starlit skies above,
With starlit seas below,
We move with all the suns that move,
With all the suns that flow;
For, fond or free, Earth, Sky and Sea
Wheel in the one circling wheel,
And thy heart drifteth on to me,
And only Time stands still.

Between two shores of Death we drift,
Behind are things forgot;
Before the tide is driving swift
To lands beholden not.
Above, the sky is fair and cold;
Below, the morning sea
Sweeps o'er the loves that were of old,
But, O Love! kiss thou me.

Ah, lonely are the ocean ways,
And dangerous the deep,
And frail the bark that strays
Above the seas asleep!
Ah, too no more at sail nor oar;
We drift, or bond or free;
On you far shores the breakers roar,
But, O Love! kiss thou me.

And ever as thou sangest I drew near,
Then sudden silence heard our hearts that beat,
For now there was an end of doubt and fear,
Now passions filled my soul and led my feet;
Then silent didst thou rise, thy love to meet.
Who, sinking on thy breast, knew naught
But thee.

And in the happy night I kissed thee, Sweet,
Ah, Sweet! between the starlight and the sea,
The last echoes of her rich notes floated
Down the chamber and slowly died away;
but in my heart they rolled on and on. I have heard among the woman singers at Abouthis voices more perfect than the voice of Cleopatra, but never have I heard one so thrilling or so sweet with passion's honey-notes. And indeed 'twas not the voice alone; 'twas the perfumed chamber wherein was set all that could move the sense; 'twas the passion of the thought and words, and the surpassing grace and loveliness of that most royal woman who sang them. For, as she sang, almost did I seem to think that we twain were indeed floating alone with the night, upon the wide, dark, summer sea. And when she ceased to touch the harp, and, rising, she stretched out her arms toward me, and, with the last low notes of song yet quivering upon her lips, left all the wonder of her eyes upon my eyes, almost did she draw me to her. But I remembered, and drew me not.

"Hast thou, then, no word of thanks for my poor singing, Harmachis?" she said at length.

"Yes, O Queen," I answered, speaking very low, for my voice was choked; "but thy songs are not good for the sons of men to hear—of a truth they overwhelm me!"

"Nay, Harmachis; for thee there is no fear," she said, laughing softly—"seeing that I know how far thy thoughts are set from woman's beauty and the common weakness of thy sex. With cold iron we may safely toy."

I thought within myself that coldest iron can be brought to whistest heat but the fire be fierce enough. But I said naught, and, though my hand trembled, once more I grasped the dagger's hilt, and, with a fear at my own weakness, set myself to find a means to slay her while yet my sense remained.

"Come hither, Harmachis," she went on, in her softest voice. "Come, sit by me, and we will talk together; for I have much to tell thee." And she made place for me at her side upon the silken seat.

And I, thinking that I might the more swiftly strike, rose and seated myself some little way from her, while, flinging back her head, she gazed on me with her slumberous eyes.

Now was my occasion, for her white throat and breast were bare, and, with a slight effort, once again I lifted my hand to clutch the dagger hilt. But, more quick than thought, she caught my fingers with her own and gently held them.

"Why lookest thou so wildly, Harmachis?" she said. "Art sick?"

"Ay, sick indeed," I gasped.

"Then lean thou upon the cushions and rest thee," she answered, still holding my hand, wherefrom the strength had fled. "The fit will surely pass. Too long hast thou labored with thy stars. How soft is the night air that flows from yonder casement heavy with the breath of lilies! Hark to the whisper of the sea lapping against the rocks, that, though faint it is, yet, being so strong, doth almost drown the phlox, cool fall of yonder mountain. List to Philoecus; how sweet from a full heart of love she sings her message to her dear! Surely 'tis a lovely night, and most beautiful is nature's music sung with a hundred voices

from wind and trees and birds and ocean's tinkled lips, and yet still to tune. Listen, Harmachis; something have I guessed concerning thee. Thou, too, art of a royal race; no humble blood pours in those veins of thine. Surely such a shoot could spring but from the stock of Princes! What! gazest thou at the leaf mark on my breast? 'Twas prickled there in honor of Osiris, whom with thee I worship. See!"

"Let me hence," I groaned, striving to rise; but all my strength had gone.

"Nay, not yet awhile. Thou wouldst not leave me yet! Thou canst not leave me yet. Harmachis, hast thou never loved?"

"Nay, nay, O Queen! What have I to do with love! Let me hence! I am faint—for done!"

"Never to have loved—'tis strange! Never to have known some woman's heart beat all in time to thine—never to have seen the eyes of thy adored swim with passion's tears as she sighed her vows upon thy breast! Never to have loved—never to have lost thyself in the mystery of another's soul; nor to have learned how Nature can strengthen our manhood, loneliness, and with the golden web of love of twain weave one identity! Why, 'tis never to have lived, Harmachis!"

And ever as she murmured she drew nearer to me, till at last, with a long, sweet sigh, she flung one white arm about my neck, and gazing upon me with blue, unfathomable eyes, smiled her dars, slow smile, that, like an opening flower, revealed beauty within beauty hidden. Scarcely she bent her queenly form and still more near—now her perfumed breath played upon my hair, and now her lips met mine!

And, was it me! In that kiss, more deadly and more strong than the embrace of death, were forgotten Isis, my Heavenly Hope, Oaths, Honor, Country, Friends, all things save that Cleopatra clasped me in her arms and called me Love and Lord.

"Now pledge me," she murmured—"pledge me one cup of wine in token of thy love."

I took the draught, and deep I drank; and then too late I knew that it was drugged.

Back I fell upon the couch, and, though my senses still were with me, I could neither speak nor rise.

But Cleopatra, bending over me, drew the dagger from my robe.

"I've won!" she cried, shaking back her long hair, "I've won, and for the stake of Egypt—why, 'twas a game worth playing. With this dagger, then, thou wouldst have slain me, O my Royal rival, whose myrtilons e'en now are gathered at my palace gate? Art still awake? Now, what hinders me that I should not plunge it to the heart?"

I heard and feebly pointed to my breast, for faint was I to die. She drew herself to the



"I'VE WON!" SHE CRIED.

full of her imperial height, and the great knife glittered in her hand. Down it came till its edges pricked my flesh.

"Nay," she cried again, and cast it from her. "Too well I like thee. Pity 'twere to slay such a man! I give thee thy life.

Live on, lost Pharaoh! Live on, poor fallen Harmachis, to adorn my triumph!"

"Nay, what, ver also might be, this could not be. Oh, 'twas an awful dream that I had dreamed! A second such would slay a man! 'Twere better to die than to face such another vision sent from hell. But though the thing was naught but a hateful fantasy of a mind estranged, where was I now? Where was I now? I should be in the Alabaster Hall, waiting till Charmion came forth.

Where was I And, O ye gods! what was that dreadful thing whose shape was as the shape of a man—that thing draped in blood stained white and huddled in a hideous heap even at the foot of the couch whereon I seemed to lie!

With a shriek I sprang at it, as a lion springs, and struck with all my strength. Heavily fell the blow, and beneath its weight the thing rolled over upon its side. Half mad with terror, I rent away the white covering; and there, his knees bound beneath his hanging jaw, was the Laked body of a man—and that man the Roman Consul Paulus! There he lay, through his heart a dagger—my dagger, handed with the sphinx of gold—and pained by its

blade to his broad breast a scroll, and, on the scroll, writing in the Roman character. I drew near and read, and this was the writing:

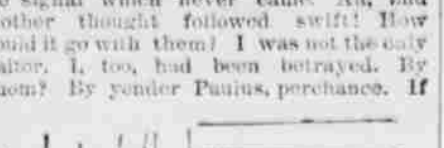
HARMACHIS: SALVERE EGOSUM QUEM SUBDERE NORAS PAULUS ROMANUS DISCE HINC QUID PRODERE PROFIT.

"Grading, Harmachis! 'Twas that Roman Paulus whom thou didst scorn. See how he bleeds ere thou tread!"

Sick and faint I staggered back from the sight of that white corpse stained with its own blood. Sick and faint I staggered back, till the wall stayed me, while without the birds sang a merry greeting to the day. So it was no dream, and I was lost! I lost!

I thought of my sweet father Anubimbat,

for, the vision of him flashed to my mind, as he would be when they came to tell him his son's shame and the ruin of his hopes. I thought of that patriot priest, my uncle Sepsa, waiting the long night through for the signal which never came. Ah, and another thought followed swift! How would it go with them? I was not the only traitor, I, too, had been betrayed. By whom? By yonder Paulus, perchance. If



"SO MY MESSENGER HAS FOUND YOU!"

"twere Paulus, he knew but little of those who conspired with me. But in my robe had been the secret lists. O Amen! they were gone! and the fate of Paulus would be the fate of all the patriots of Egypt. And at this thought my mind gave way. I sank and swooned even where I stood.

My sense came back to me and lengthening shadows told me that it was afternoon. I staggered to my feet; there still was the corpse of Paulus, keeping its awful watch about me. Desperate I ran to the door.

'Twas barred, and without I heard the tramp of sentinels. As I stood, they challenged and grounded their spears. Then the bolts shot back, the door opened, and radiant, clad in Royal attire, came the conquering Cleopatra. Alone she came, and the door was shut behind her. I stood like a dazed man; but she swept on till she was face to face with me.

"Greeting, Harmachis," she said, smiling sweetly. "I have good news for thee. The guards' door was opened, and two armed Gauls stepped across the threshold.

"Take away this carrion," said Cleopatra, "and fling it to the kites. Stay, draw that dagger from his traitor breast. The men bowed low, and the knife, rusted red with blood, was dragged from the heart of Paulus and laid upon the table. Then they seized him by the head and body and staggered thence, and I heard their heavy footsteps as they bore him down the stairs.

"Behold, Harmachis, thou art in an evil case," she said, when the sound of the footsteps had died away. "How strangely doth the wheel of Fortune turn! But for that traitor," she said, nodding toward the door by which the corpse of Paulus had been carried, "I should now be sitting to look on as he is, and the red rust on yonder knife would have been gathered from my heart."

"Not yet did I know how deeply I was betrayed; or why I still was left to draw the breath of life; or why Cleopatra, the tiger-hearted, had grown merciful. I did not know that she feared to slay me lest, so strong was her plot and so feeble her hold upon the Double Crown, the tumult that might tread hard upon the tidings of my murder should—even when I was no more—shake her from the throne. I did not know that because of fear and the weight of policy only she slowed scant mercy to those whom I had betrayed, or that because of cunning and not for the holy sake of woman's love—though, in truth, she liked me well enough—she chose rather to bind me to her by the fibers of my heart. And yet, this will I say in her behalf, ere when the danger-cloud had melted from her sky she kept her faith, nor save Paulus and one other, did any suffer the utmost penalty of death for their part in the great plot against Cleopatra's crown and dynasty. But many other things they suffered.

And so she went, leaving the vision of her glory to strive with the shame and sorrow of my heart. Oh, bitter were the hours that could now no more be made light with prayer. For the link between me and the Divine was snapped, and no more did I commune with her Priest. Bitter were the hours and dark, but ever through their darkness shone the starry eyes of Cleopatra, and came the echo of her whispered love. For not yet was the cup of sorrow full. Still hung lingered in my heart, and almost could I think that I had failed to some higher end, and that even in the depths of ruin I should find another and more flowery path to triumph.

For thus those do who wickedly deceive themselves, striving to lay the burden of their evil deeds upon the back of Fate, striving to believe their sin may compass good, and to murder Conscience with the sharp plea of necessity. But naught can it avail, for hand in hand down the path to sin rush Remorse and Ruin, and woe to him they follow! Ay, and woe to me, who of all sinners am the chief!

CHAPTER XVII. IMPRISONMENT OF HARMACHIS; THE SCORN OF CHARMION; THE SETTING FREE OF HARMACHIS; THE COMING OF QUINTUS DELLIUS.

OR A space of eleven days was I thus kept imprisoned in my chambers; nor did I see any one save the sentries at my door, the slaves who in silence brought me food and drink, and a Cleopatra's maid, who came continually. But though her words of love were many, naught would she tell me of how things went without. She came in many moods—now gay and laughing, now full of wise thoughts and speech, and now passionate only—and to every mood she gave some new-found charm. Full of talk she was as to how I should help her make Egypt great and lessen the burdens of the people and fight the Roman eagles back. And though at first I listened heavily when she spoke thus, by slow advance she wrapped me closer and yet more

close in her magic web, from which it was no escape. My mind fell in time with hers. Then I, too, opened something of my heart, and somewhat also of the plans that I had formed for Egypt. And she seemed to listen gladly, weighing them well, and spoke of means and methods, telling me how she would purify the faith and repair the ancient temples—ay, and build new ones to the Gods. And ever she crept deeper and more deep into my heart, till at length, now that all things else had gone from me, I learned to love her with all the unspent passion of my aching soul. I had naught left to me but Cleopatra's love, and I winned my life about it, and brooded o'er it as a widow o'er her only babe. And thus the very author of my shame became my all, my dearest dear, and I loved her with wild, deep love that grew and grew, till it seemed to swallow up the past and make

the present as a dream. For she had conquered me, she had robbed me of my home, and steeped me to the lips in shame, and I, poor, blinded wretch! I kissed the rod that smote me and was her very slave.

Ay, even now, in those dreams which will come when sleep unlocks the secret heart, and sets all its terrors free to roam through the open halls of thought, I seem to see her royal form, as I saw it, come with arms outstretched and her own light shining in her deep eyes, with lips apart and flowing locks, and stamped upon her face the look of utter tenderness that she alone could wear. Ay, still, after all the years, I seem to see her come as erst she came, and still I wake to know her an unutterable lie. And thus one day she came. She had fled in haste, she said, from some great council summoned concerning the wars of Antony in Syria, and she came, as she had left the council, in all her robes of state, and in her hand the scepter, and on her brow the diadem of gold. There she sat before me laughing; for, wearing of them, she had told the envoys, to whom she gave audience in the council, that she was called from their presence by a sudden message come from Rome; and to her the jest seemed merry. Suddenly she rose, took the diadem from her brow, and set it on my hair, and on my shoulders her Royal diadems, and in my hand the scepter, and bowed the knee before me. Then, laughing again, she kissed me on the lips and said I was, indeed, her King. But, remembering that I had been crowned in the name of Abouthis, and remembering also that wreath of roses whereof the odor haunts me yet, I rose pale with wrath and cast the tresses from me, asking her how she dared to mock me—her caged bird! And methinks there was that about me that startled her, for she fell back.

"Nay, Harmachis," she said, "be not wroth. How knowest thou that I mock thee? How knowest thou that I would not be Pharaoh in fact and deed?"

"What meanest thou?" I said. "Wilt thou, then, wed me before Egypt? How else can I be Pharaoh now?"

"She cast down her eyes. 'Perchance, love, 'tis in my mind to wed thee,' she said gently.

"Listen!" she went on. "Thou growest pale here in this prison, and little dost thou eat. Gainsay me not! I know it from the slaves. I have kept thee here, Harmachis, for thine own sake, that is so dear to me; and for thine own sake, and thy honor's sake, must thou still seem to be my prisoner. Else wouldst thou be shamed and slain—ay, murdered secretly. But here can I meet thee no more; therefore to-morrow will I free thee in all save in the name, and thou shalt once more be seen at Court as my astronomer. And this reason will I give—that thou hast cleared thyself; and, moreover, that thy auguries as regards the war have been auguries of truth—as, indeed, they have, though thereon have I no cause to thank thee, for methinks thou didst suit thy prophecies to fit thy cause. Now farewell; for I must return to those heavy-browed ambassadors; and grow not so suddenly wroth, for who knows what may come to pass 'twixt thee and me?"

And, with a little nod, she went, leaving it on my mind that she had it in her heart to take me to husband. And, of a truth, I do believe that, at this hour, such was her thought. For, if she loved me not, still she held me dear, and as yet she had not wearied of me.

On the morrow Cleopatra came not, but Charmion came—Charmion, whom I had not seen since that fatal night of ruin. She entered and stood before me, with pale face and downcast eyes, and her first words were words of bitterness.

"Pardon me," she said, in her gentle voice, "in that I dare to come to thee in Cleopatra's place. Not for long is thy joy delayed, for thou shalt see her presently. I shrink at her words, as well I might, and, seeing her vantage, she seized it.

"I come, Harmachis—Royal no more! I come to tell thee that thou art free! Free thou art to face thine own infamy, and see it thrown back from every eye that trusted thee, even as shadows are from water. I come to tell thee that the great plot—the plot of twelve years and more—is at its utter end. None have been slain, indeed, unless 'tis Sepsa, who has vanished. But all the leaders have been seized and put in chains, or driven from the land, and their party is no more. The storm has melted ere it burst. Khem is lost, and lost forever, for her last struggle is gone! No longer may she struggle—now for all time must she bow her neck to the yoke, and her back to the rod of the oppressor!"

I groaned aloud. "Alas, I was betrayed!" I said. "Paulus betrayed me."

"Thou wast betrayed! Nay, thou thyself wast the betrayer! How came it that thou didst not slay Cleopatra when thou wast alone with her? Answer, thou forsworn!"

"She dragged me," I said again.

"O Harmachis!" answered the pitiless girl, "how low art thou fallen from that Prince whom once I knew! Thou who dost not scorn to be a liar! Yes, thou wast drugged—drugged with a love philtre! Yes, thou didst sell Egypt and thy cause for the price of a woman's kiss! Thou sorrow and thou shame!" she went on, pointing her finger at me and flitting her eyes to my face. "thou scorn!—thou Outcast!—and thou Contempt! Dost thou still say, Ay, shrink from me—knowing what thou art, well mayst thou shrink! Shrink and crawl to Cleopatra's feet, and kiss her sandals till she time as it pleases her to trample thee in thy kindred dirt; but from all honest folk shrink!—shrink!"

My soul quivered beneath the lash of her bitter hate, but I had no words to answer.

"How comes it," I said at last in a heavy voice, "that thou, too, art not betrayed, but art here to taunt me, thou who once didst swear that thou didst love me! Being a woman, hast thou no pity for the frailty of man?"

"My name was not on the lists," she said, dropping her dark eyes. "Herein is an opportunity I betray me also, O Harmachis! Ay, 'tis because I once did love thee—dost thou, indeed, remember it?—that I feel thy fall the more. The shame of one whom we once have loved must in some sort become our shame, and must ever cling to us in that we blindly held a thing so base close to our inmost heart. Art thou also, then, a fool! Wouldst thou, fresh from thy royal wanderer's arms, come to me for comfort—to me of all the world?"

"How know I," I said, "that it was not thou who, in thy jealous anger, didst betray our plans? Charmion, long ago Sepsa warned me against thee, and of a truth now that I recall—"

"'Tis like a traitor," she broke in, reddening to her brow, "to think that all are of my family and hold a common mind! Nay, I betrayed thee not; 'twas that poor knave Paulus, whose heart failed him at the last, and who is rightly served. Nor will I stay to hear thoughts so base. Harmachis—Royal no more!—Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, bids me say that thou art free, and that she waits thee in the Alabaster Hall."

And shooting one swift glance through her long lashes, she smiled and was gone.

So once more I came and went about the Court, though but sparingly, for my heart was full of shame and terror, and on every face I feared to see the scorn of those who knew me for what I was. But naught I saw, for all those who had knowledge of the plot

had fled, and for her own sake he word had Charmion spoken. Also Cleopatra had put it about that I was innocent. But my guilt lay heavy on me, and made me thin and wore away the beauty of my countenance. And though I was free in name, yet was I ever wretched; nor might I stir beyond the palace grounds.

And at length came the day that brought with it Quintus Dellius, that false Roman knight who ever served the rising star. He bore letters to Cleopatra from Marcus Antonius the Triumvir, who, fresh from the victory of Philippi, was now in Asia, wringing gold from the subject kings wherewith to satisfy the greed of his legions.

Well did I mind me of the day. Cleopatra, clad in her robes of state, attended by the officers of her Court, among whom I stood, sat in the great hall on her throne of gold, and bade the heralds admit the Ambassador of Antony the Triumvir. The great doors were thrown wide, and amidst the blare of trumpets and santes of the Gallic guards, clad in glittering golden armor and a scarlet cloak of silk, came the Roman in, fol-

lowed by his suite of officers. Smooth-faced he was and fair to look upon, with a supple form; but his mouth was cold, and his eyes his shifting eyes. And while the heralds called out his name, titles and offices, as a man who is amazed he fixed his gaze on Cleopatra, who sat on her throne radiant with beauty. Then, when the heralds had made an end, and he still stood thus, not stirring, Cleopatra spoke in the Roman tongue:

"Greeting to thee, noble Dellius, envoy of the most mighty Antony, whose shadow lies across the world as though Mars himself now towered up above us petty princes—greetings and welcome to our poor city of Alexandria. Unfold, we pray thee, the purpose of thy coming."

Still the crafty Dellius made no answer but stood as a man amazed.

"What ails thee, noble Dellius, that thou dost not speak?" asked Cleopatra. "Hast thou then wandered so long in Asia that doors of Roman speech are shut to thee? What tongue hast thou? Name it and we'll speak therein—for to us are all tongues known."

Then at last he spoke, in a soft, full voice: "Oh, pardon me, most mighty Egypt, if I have thus been stricken dumb before thee; but too great beauty, like Death himself, doth paralyze the tongue and steal our sense away. The eyes of him who looks upon the fires of the mid-day sun are blind to all beside, and thus with sudden vision of thy glory, Royal Egypt, didst overwhelm my mind, and leave me helpless and unwitting of all things else."

"Of a truth, noble Dellius," answered Cleopatra, "they teach a pretty school of flattery yonder in Cilicia."

"How goes the saying here in Alexandria?" replied the courtly Roman. "The breath of flattery can not wait a cloud," does it not? But to my task. Here, Royal Egypt, are letters under the hand and seal of noble Antony treating of certain matters of the State. Is it thy pleasure that I should read them?"

"Break the seals and read," she answered.

And bowing, he broke the seals and read. "The Triumvir Respublica Constituenda, by the mouth of Marcus Antonius, the Triumvir, to Cleopatra, by grace of the Roman people, Queen of Upper and Lower Egypt, send greeting. Whereas, it has come to our knowledge that thou, Cleopatra, hast contrary to thy promise and thy duty, both by thy servant Ailienus and by thy servant Scorpion, the Governor of Cyprus, aided the rebel murderer Cassius against the arms of the most noble Triumvirate. And, whereas, it has come to our knowledge that thou thyself wast but lately making ready a great fleet to this end. We summon thee that thou dost without delay journey to Cilicia, there to meet the noble Antony, and in person make answer concerning these charges which are laid against thee. And we warn thee that if thou dost disobey this, our summons, it is at thy peril. Farewell."

The eyes of Cleopatra flashed as she hearkened to these high words, and I saw her hands tighten on the golden lions' heads wherewith they rested.

"We have had the flattery," she said, "and now, lest we be cloyed with sweets, we have its antidote! Listen thou, Dellius. The charges in that letter, or, rather, in that writ of summons, are false, as all folk can bear us witness. And it is not now, and it is not to thee, that we will make defense of our acts of war and policy. Nor will we leave our kingdom to journey into Cilicia, and there, like some poor suppliant at law, to plead our cause before the court of the noble Antony. If Antony will have speech with us and inquire concerning these high matters, the sea is open and his welcome shall be royal. Let him come hither. That is our answer to thee and to the Triumvirate. O Dellius!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The Poorest People on Earth.

In both India and Egypt it is women who collect the fuel for the family. They do this by going along the road and gathering up the droppings, which they take home and dry for fire-wood. Their wages are very small where they work by the day, and neither men nor women get more than enough to keep an American laborer in cigars. Farm laborers in India get from six to eight cents a day, and masons receive about ten cents a day. In my tour around the world I found no place where the people were so poor as in India, and nowhere else in the world will you find food so scarce that the people look like living skeletons, and regulate the amount they eat according to the amount necessary to sustain life. In Japan and Burma and in Korea the people are poor, but their poverty is nothing like this. In Egypt they are ground to death with taxation, but their stomachs are not stinted to such a degree that they can barely keep alive. There are no signs of suffering in the faces and limbs of the people of Palestine and Turkey, and the only place where starvation is continually staring the man in the face is in certain districts of India.—F. G. Carpenter, in National Tribune.

had fled, and for her own sake he word had Charmion spoken. Also Cleopatra had put it about that I was innocent. But my guilt lay heavy on me, and made me thin and wore away the beauty of my countenance. And though I was free in name, yet was I ever wretched; nor might I stir beyond the palace grounds.

And at length came the day that brought with it Quintus Dellius, that false Roman knight who ever served the rising star. He bore letters to Cleopatra from Marcus Antonius the Triumvir, who, fresh from the victory of Philippi, was now in Asia, wringing gold from the subject kings wherewith to satisfy the greed of his legions.

Well did I mind me of the day. Cleopatra, clad in her robes of state, attended by the officers of her Court, among whom I stood, sat in the great hall on her throne of gold, and bade the heralds admit the Ambassador of Antony the Triumvir. The great doors were thrown wide, and amidst the blare of trumpets and santes of the Gallic guards, clad in glittering golden armor and a scarlet cloak of silk, came the Roman in, fol-

lowed by his suite of officers. Smooth-faced he was and fair to look upon, with a supple form; but his mouth was cold, and his eyes his shifting eyes. And while the heralds called out his name, titles and offices, as a man who is amazed he fixed his gaze on Cleopatra, who sat on her throne radiant with beauty. Then, when the heralds had made an end, and he still stood thus, not stirring, Cleopatra spoke in the Roman tongue:

"Greeting to thee, noble Dellius, envoy of the most mighty Antony, whose shadow lies across the world as though Mars himself now towered up above us petty princes—greetings and welcome to our poor city of Alexandria. Unfold, we pray thee, the purpose of thy coming."

Still the crafty Dellius made no answer but stood as a man amazed.

"What ails thee, noble Dellius, that thou dost not speak?" asked Cleopatra. "Hast thou then wandered so long in Asia that doors of Roman speech are shut to thee? What tongue hast thou? Name it and we'll speak therein—for to us are all tongues known."

Then at last he spoke, in a soft, full voice: "Oh, pardon me, most mighty Egypt, if I have thus been stricken dumb before thee; but too great beauty, like Death himself, doth paralyze the tongue and steal our sense away. The eyes of him who looks upon the fires of the mid-day sun are blind to all beside, and thus with sudden vision of thy glory, Royal Egypt, didst overwhelm my mind, and leave me helpless and unwitting of all things else."

"Of a truth, noble Dellius," answered Cleopatra, "they teach a pretty school of flattery yonder in Cilicia."

"How goes the saying here in Alexandria?" replied the courtly Roman. "The breath of flattery can not wait a cloud," does it not? But to my task. Here, Royal Egypt, are letters under the hand and seal of noble Antony treating of certain matters of the State. Is it thy pleasure that I should read them?"

"Break the seals and read," she answered.

And bowing, he broke the seals and read. "The Triumvir Respublica Constituenda, by the mouth of Marcus Antonius, the Triumvir, to Cleopatra, by grace of the Roman people, Queen of Upper and Lower Egypt, send greeting. Whereas, it has come to our knowledge that thou, Cleopatra, hast contrary to thy promise and thy duty, both by thy servant Ailienus and by thy servant Scorpion, the Governor of Cyprus, aided the rebel murderer Cassius against the arms of the most noble Triumvirate. And, whereas, it has come to our knowledge that thou thyself wast but lately making ready a great fleet to this end. We summon thee that thou dost without delay journey to Cilicia, there to meet the noble Antony, and in person make answer concerning these charges which are laid against thee. And we warn thee that if thou dost disobey this, our summons, it is at thy peril. Farewell."

The eyes of Cleopatra flashed as she hearkened to these high words, and I saw her hands tighten on the golden lions' heads wherewith they rested.

"We have had the flattery," she said, "and now, lest we be cloyed with sweets, we have its antidote! Listen thou, Dellius. The charges in that letter, or, rather, in that writ of summons, are false, as all folk can bear us witness. And it is not now, and it is not to thee, that we will make defense of our acts of war and policy. Nor will we leave our kingdom to journey into Cilicia, and there, like some poor suppliant at law, to plead our cause before the court of the noble Antony. If Antony will have speech with us and inquire concerning these high matters, the sea is open and his welcome shall be royal. Let him come hither. That is our answer to thee and to the Triumvirate. O Dellius!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The Poorest People on Earth.

In both India and Egypt it is women who collect the fuel for the family. They do this by going along the road and gathering up the droppings, which they take home and dry for fire-wood. Their wages are very small where they work by the day, and neither men nor women get more than enough to keep an American laborer in cigars. Farm laborers in India get from six to eight cents a day, and masons receive about ten cents a day. In my tour around the world I found no place where the people were so poor as in India, and nowhere else in the world will you find food so scarce that the people look like living skeletons, and regulate the amount they eat according to the amount necessary to sustain life. In Japan and Burma and in Korea the people are poor, but their